Highlights

- 2,000 WFP food rations reached Al-Otaiba in Rural Damascus for the first time in 15 months.

- In October, WFP expanded its partnership portfolio within Syria, signing agreements with three additional local NGOs. The new partners will distribute WFP food assistance in Ar-Raqqa and Aleppo governorates.

- Targeted assistance was implemented in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, South Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley in October and commenced in North Lebanon on 1 November.

- In Egypt, WFP and UNHCR are working on transitioning to an electronic voucher platform.
WFP concluded October cycle dispatches on 31 October, achieving the highest dispatch figure since the beginning of the operation. A total of 684,318 family food rations were dispatched to locations in 13 governorates, enough to provide assistance to over 3.4 million beneficiaries. Dispatches could not reach Al-Hasakeh, as six WFP trucks transporting food rations to the governorate were caught in fighting and re-directed to Ar-Raqqa as a result.

While October distribution cycle is still ongoing, September distributions ended on 22 October. WFP reached 2.5 million beneficiaries, representing 83 percent of the planned 3 million. Distributions were postponed in various locations due to a late arrival of 2,000 mt of rice, causing a delay to the conclusion of the cycle. Moreover, widespread insecurity and armed forces along main transport routes hindered dispatches to Aleppo and Al-Hasakeh, preventing the full target from being met. A further 5,364 mt of fortified wheat flour was distributed to approximately 1.4 million people, representing 63 percent of the September plan.

EVOLVING NEEDS

OCHA estimates that 9.3 million people, accounting for about 40 percent of the entire population, are currently in need of assistance in Syria. This indicates a 30 percent increase compared to the 6.8 million people identified last July. The number of IDPs is estimated to have increased by 65 percent since July, and it is now believed to have reached 6.5 million people.

Accordingly, the Food and Agriculture sector will adjust its food needs projections to approximately 6 million people, in view of the ongoing revision of the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP). However, figures will be subject to further adjustments once the results of WFP/FAO Joint Rapid Food and Agriculture Needs Assessment, currently underway, will become available.

Homs

Over the reporting period, intensified fighting in rural Homs caused further population displacement across the governorate, significantly increasing humanitarian needs in the area.

According to SARC estimates, Al-Qariatin, in the south-eastern area of rural Homs, is currently hosting between 40,000 and 50,000 IDPs from surrounding areas, who are believed to be in need of assistance. Despite ongoing fighting in the area, an inter-agency humanitarian convoy, escorted by community leaders and a governor representative, reached the town on 29 October. In addition, Talbese, where according to SARC approximately 55,000 people are in need of assistance, was reached by a joint humanitarian convoy on 24 October. Additional inter-agency convoys were sent to other locations in the conflict-affected governorate, including Al-Rastan and neighbouring villages, which were reached on 8 November to meet pressing humanitarian needs.

Also in Homs, SARC estimates that approximately 9,000 people fled from Sadad village following an attack by an armed group on 22 October, and have sought refuge in other locations in the governorate, including Fohaila, Zaidal, Fayrouza, Qattena, Alzahra and Alarman. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, WFP dispatched 400 family food rations to respond to the most urgent needs of approximately 2,000 people still trapped in the village. On 30 October an inter-agency rapid assessment mission found that 7,500 people in Sadad were in need of assistance. As a result, an inter-agency convoy was sent to the location on 2 November.
In addition, since 15 October ongoing clashes have been preventing all humanitarian access to Al-Waer in Homs governorate where the majority of the population, estimated at 400,000 people, are partially unreachable, according to SARC. WFP’s partner in the area, Al-Birr NGO, is distributing 4,000 family food rations delivered in early October, in addition to 1,700 ready-to-eat food rations that had been previously pre-positioned for emergency response. More recently, 700 families were able to leave Al-Waer and are being registered for assistance. In addition, WFP’s NGO partner Aoun delivered 1,400 family rations inside the city on 11 November.

MOADAMIYEH

An additional 1,800 civilians were evacuated from Moadamiyeh on 29 October and were registered in Qudsaia collective shelters in Rural Damascus. This third evacuation followed those of 12 and 13 October, during which a total of 4,000 people were allowed to leave the besieged town. However, deep concern remains for the conditions of those still trapped in Moadamiyeh, who have not received any assistance for over a year due to the protracted siege. In spite of repeated requests and continued appeals for unfettered humanitarian access, no humanitarian agency has been allowed to access the area since the beginning of the siege. Approval is still pending for the last request, submitted on 21 October, to deliver relief supplies to the population of Moadamiyeh.

INTER-AGENCY ASSESSMENTS

The WFP/FAO Joint Rapid Food and Agriculture Needs Assessment is underway. Two training sessions were held in Damascus from 21 to 23 October and in Tartous from 27 to 29 October to prepare field staff for the exercise. By 2 November, 19 teams covering all 14 governorates have been deployed. Fieldwork was concluded on 9 November and results are scheduled to be published at the end of November.

Approval for an OCHA-led Joint Humanitarian Assessment was received on 12 November. The exercise, originally planned for April 2013, will be launched within the next few days. Moreover, the Nutrition Working Group has finalized preparations for the national rapid nutrition assessment which is expected to start mid-November 2013.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

In order to increase its distribution capacity and coverage, WFP has started expanding its local partnerships. In October, agreements were signed with three new NGOs, which will distribute WFP food rations in Ar-Raqqa and Aleppo governorates. Moreover, assessment is underway for two additional NGOs, which are expected to strengthen distributions in Damascus and Deir ez-Zor governorates. Agreements are planned to be signed as soon the NGOs are thoroughly examined through WFP’s due diligence process. Finally, WFP is currently in the process of individuating a sixth potential new partner, in order to broaden its partnership portfolio in Dar’a governorate.

WINTERIZATION

UN agencies and partners have developed a response strategy to further support the Syrian population and to ensure adequate food and nutrition security during the upcoming winter season. WFP, together with the Food and Agriculture sector, is planning to provide emergency fuel support to IDP shelters in partnership with UNHCR, from pre-positioned stocks in Qamishly, Tartous and Damascus. Furthermore, WFP is considering the possibility of providing vulnerable households with Wonderbags®, heating-retention devices that significantly reduce the consumption of water and fuel for cooking purposes. Furthermore, other agencies’ plans for the upcoming winter also include the possibility of distributing seeds, animal feed and vegetable production packages, aimed at increasing the sources of food and income for vulnerable households.
MARKET ANALYSIS

Volatile security conditions, ongoing fighting on supply routes, lack of regulations and disruption of agricultural production continue to cause a general upwards trend in the price of basic household items across Syria. However, the cause and extent of the increase vary across different governorates. WFP market price monitoring indicated that during the past weeks the price of vegetable oil, a basic cooking ingredient, showed a sharp increase, especially in Damascus and Rural Damascus. In Homs, however, an opposite trend was observed, due to better market functioning in Tartous and Idleb. The price of butane also increased in all governorates, with the exception of Aleppo, where the recent re-opening of the Khanaser passage allowed the safe passage of goods into the governorate, resulting in a slight decrease in the price of the commodities. In Al-Hasakeh, where armed group controlling the main entry points have been preventing access of market supplies, the price of dairy and vegetables is currently seven times higher than pre-crisis levels. The north-eastern governorates have reportedly witnessed a particularly sharp increase in the price of fuel, owing mainly to the absence of any form of regulation. In Qamislhy city, for example, some traders are reportedly refusing to sell fuel to IDPs from Deir-ez-Zor, or are quoting prices three times higher than those offered to local residents, further eroding their coping capacities.

FEATURED UPDATE

ACCESS

Escalating fighting and bureaucratic constraints continue to restrict humanitarian access to a number of locations across several governorates, notably in Rural Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh and Idleb.

Recent Achievements

Amid significant challenges, however, WFP made some gains over the past few weeks, providing food assistance to areas which had not been reached for a protracted period of time. Thanks to SARC, in coordination with SARC branch in Rural Damascus, WFP food was distributed in the village of Al-Otaiba in Eastern Ghouta, Rural Damascus, for the first time in 15 months. SARC reached Al-Otaiba on 6 November, distributing a total of 2,000 WFP family food rations to approximately 10,000 people. Last WFP food distribution in the town took place in July 2012, when 150 family food rations, sufficient to assist 750 people, were distributed.

Between 24 October and 8 November, WFP food items were transported to four hard-to-reach areas alongside joint humanitarian convoys supported by the WFP-led Logistics Cluster. An inter-agency convoy reached Aleppo city on the 26 of October, while three additional convoys reached various locations in rural Homs, including Talbese and Qariatin on 24 and 29 October, respectively. On 8 November, the first part of a dual inter-agency convoy to rural Homs reached Al-Rastan, while the second delivered humanitarian assistance to Krad Dasniyeh, Tesnime, Kafnan, Qanniyeh and Jabourin. A further 1,100 WFP family food rations reached Sadad in rural Homs on 2 November alongside a joint humanitarian convoy. While Sadad had generally been accessible over the past few months, concerns arose after the village was stormed by an armed group on 22 October, causing destruction and displacement and rising fears of blockades and further violence. Overall, during the reporting period, WFP participated in five inter-agency convoys, transporting a total of 22,200 WFP family food rations and 155 mt of wheat flour, providing assistance to 111,000 people living in access-challenging areas.
Access Challenges

In spite of these advancements, humanitarian deliveries continue to face various security and bureaucratic challenges on the ground. A joint humanitarian convoy, escorted by UN and SARC teams, was dispatched to Zaafraniya, Almajdal, Alkin, Dahr Alkin, in Homs governorate on 11 November. However, the convoy was held at the final check point and was not able to reach its destinations. The UN Country Team immediately contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who facilitated the release of the trucks and supplies, and their safe return to Homs. The UNCT and the authorities committed to facilitate the delivery of the supplies to area of Zaafraniya in the following days.

Heavy fighting in Deir-ez-Zor and Sukneh in rural Homs disrupted food dispatches to the north-eastern governorates. During October WFP was unable to send commodities to Al-Hasekeh due to insecurity on the roads. However a shipment that was dispatched during the September cycle managed to reach our Qamishly hub, after many delays on route, on the 13th October. Dispatches to Aleppo city resumed following the re-opening of the main route through Homs, which is currently safeguarded by government authorities. However, the governorate has received little or no assistance during August and September cycles due to heavy fighting along transport routes. Since 15 October, all humanitarian access to Al-Waer in rural Homs has been denied due to an intensification of on-going clashes. However, partial access was restored allowing the delivery of 1,400 food rations on 11 November. The last of a long series of requests to access the besieged area of Moadamiyeh is still pending, and no humanitarian assistance has been allowed to reach the town since the siege began over a year ago.

OCHA estimated that 2.5 million people are not being reached by humanitarian assistance. In this context, negotiating safe access with all parties to reach all those in need remain a priority for WFP and other UN agencies.
A recent study conducted by the World Bank on the economic and social impact of the Syrian conflict on Lebanon, revealed that Lebanon is bearing a much larger refugee hosting weight than any other country. This has a significant economic and social impact. The study revealed that the real GDP growth is cut by 2.9 percent points each conflict year (e.g. 4.4 percent to 1.5 percent in 2013). In addition, the labour market is impacted significantly as the unemployment rate is expected to double by the end of the year (currently over 20 percent). In addition, it is estimated that over 170,000 Lebanese will be pushed into poverty by the end of the year. It is evident that the Syrian conflict has a significant impact on the economic and social welfare of the Lebanese community. This is further confirmed by the sharp increase for demand of Social Safety Net programs.

Since the beginning of the year, WFP food voucher programme has injected over US$95.5 million into the Lebanese economy, particularly in some of the poorest areas of Lebanon. WFP food vouchers can be redeemed in almost 250 Lebanese small and medium size shops spread across the country, yet over 72 percent of these shops are located in impoverished areas of the Bekaa and the North, where large concentrations of refugees are hosted.

The food parcel commodities distributed to Syrians awaiting registration are also purchased locally. Through this modality of assistance, WFP has injected an additional US$130,000 into the local market since the beginning of the year.

In October, WFP assisted over 537,000 people, of which the majority (95 percent) was reached through food vouchers. The remaining five percent were assisted through food parcels, which are exclusively provided to new arrivals awaiting registration. Compared with September distributions, the number of people assisted by WFP slightly decreased in October when WFP began targeting food assistance to those who cannot feed themselves and their families. Overall, WFP’s food assistance will keep on increasing as WFP continues to support additional newly registered refugees.

WFP will continue to provide assistance to children under 2, pregnant and nursing women, elderly, and those who are unable to manage daily activities without support. These are among the most vulnerable people in the population, and WFP aims to ensure that these individuals have sufficient access to food.

**TRANSITION TO E-CARDS**

October marked the first month of the transition to an electronic voucher modality, known as e-cards, while simultaneously targeting assistance to refugees. The e-cards were successfully implemented in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon and were welcomed by both shop owners as well as beneficiaries. No incidents were reported during the transition and beneficiaries reported being well informed about the transition prior to its commencement.
Families in need receive one e-card that is automatically uploaded with US$27 per person worth of credit (the same amount as with paper vouchers). The e-cards can be redeemed at designated shops where beneficiaries can purchase food commodities of their preference and needs.

The e-card roll-out in the Bekaa Valley is underway and implementing partners are planning to simultaneously begin rolling-out a cash card for winterization. WFP’s country office and sub-office are working closely with UNHCR and joint partners on dual distributions and joint messaging to beneficiaries.

**TARGETING**

Targeting food assistance is not about cutting food assistance but rather directing resources only to those who cannot meet their food needs by themselves. In October, targeted assistance was implemented in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, South Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, hosting approximately 560,000 refugees, almost 71 percent of the total refugee population in Lebanon. Targeting in North Lebanon commenced on 1 November.

In order that all vulnerable individuals are assisted, WFP, together with UNHCR, has set-up a robust appeal process. Thus far, WFP/UNHCR have received 26,000 appeals, over one third of the entire excluded population, of which 9,000 household have been visited for verification. WFP through its partners have begun conducting visits at a rate of around 1,000 household visits per day and it is anticipated that over 70 percent will be verified in time for the November distribution. Once the targeting and verification of the appeals has been finalized, WFP and its partners will begin outreach efforts to ensure that those households which have experienced changes in their livelihoods and that cannot meet their basic food needs any longer are captured in the overall process and included into the food assistance caseload. This continuous process will ensure that WFP assistance, and donor funding, meets the needs of the vulnerable Syrian refugees.
CHALLENGES

The security situation in Lebanon remained volatile during the reporting period and continues to be a major source of concern for WFP, in particular in Tripoli, Akkar in North Lebanon and the northern Bekaa Valley.

In Tripoli, deadly clashes have resumed since violence erupted on 21 October, leaving several dead and many injured. Since a large number of beneficiaries live in Tripoli, continued violence is a serious risk to WFP’s operations. Although none of WFP’s distributions have been affected thus far, WFP remains concerned about the possible spill-over effects of the continuing violence.

Cross border incidents also continued during the reporting period. Several northern villages in Akkar and in the Bekaa were subject to shelling, although no casualties were reported.

Reports of violence in the Bekaa Valley surfaced during the reporting period. On 24 October, fighting took place 9 km south of Zahle and an explosion occurred on 31 October in Jlala; no injuries were reported. On 23 October, the Lebanese Armed Forces seized a vehicle near Aarsal loaded with machine guns and ammunition. This increased violence in the Bekaa Valley did not disrupt WFP’s activities but is being closely monitored as the area hosts over one third of WFP’s beneficiaries in Lebanon.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation was limited during this month due to the ongoing transition to targeted assistance and e-cards. During the reporting period, WFP field monitors visited 36 shops and 57 families. Feedback from the shops and households revealed overall satisfaction with the e-cards transition. Shop owners were particularly happy with the new system as they received their payments on time.

Preliminary analysis from September data was undertaken during the reporting period; 56 post distribution monitoring reports were collected in the Bekaa Valley, Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon. Results revealed that the large majority of interviewed households (95 percent) ate two to three meals per day. In addition, a majority (58 percent) also indicated that they are solely dependent on WFP food assistance to meet their food needs.

WFP’s monitoring over the past few months has also shown that refugees are increasingly moving within Lebanon, either as a result of eviction, in search of better shelter or jobs or to join other family members. These unrecorded movements of the refugee population within Lebanon will make the analysis of gaps and impact of assistance challenging.

Given the widespread field presence of WFP’s partners, the Lebanon country office has begun to collaborate with its NGO partners on monitoring and evaluation activities. Partners will perform household visits and shop monitoring on a monthly basis. Monitoring training of partners is currently underway in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon. It is hoped that this will improve efficiency of these activities given the wide presence of its partners in the areas of operation. Furthermore, such collaboration would strengthen existing partnerships and build capacity.
WFP continued its transition from in-kind food assistance to vouchers in Al Za’atri camp and is working towards establishing commercial markets with the capacity to serve the entire camp population. Thus far, two retailers have been selected with plans to be operational in time for the December voucher distribution cycle. In October, WFP reached over 105,000 Syrian refugees with vouchers valued at JOD12 (US$16.92) per person and partial in-kind rations. WFP doubled the voucher value from September to October as part of the transition. In addition, over 3,500 new arrivals were assisted with complete food rations and will be incorporated into the voucher programme the following cycle.

WFP reached over 12,200 students with date bars in October as part of the WFP school feeding programme currently underway in three schools in Al Za’atri camp. This is the highest number of students ever reached in Za’atri camp; WFP anticipates that more students will be assisted in the near future given that the number of students attending camp schools is expected to increase as registration by UNICEF is ongoing.

**RAPID ASSESSMENT OF NEW ARRIVALS**

WFP field monitors conducted a Rapid Assessment in Al Za’atri camp and found that, of the interviewed households, 93 percent cited food availability and access as one of the main two reasons for leaving Syria. As part of the assessment, three WFP field monitors interviewed 100 households in Al Za’atri camp and found that, of the interviewed households, 93 percent cited food availability and access as one of the main two reasons for leaving Syria.

**COMPREHENSIVE FOOD SECURITY MONITORING EXERCISE**

WFP, along with UNHCR and UNICEF, is developing multi-sectorial vulnerability criteria for the eventual targeting the most vulnerable Syrian refugees for humanitarian assistance in Jordan. WFP will contribute to the assessment by providing quantitative information based on a Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring exercise that will be conducted in November 2013.

Starting in early 2014, it is anticipated that the humanitarian response in Jordan will target those most in need. Lessons learned from the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) in Lebanon will be used to determine the most effective exercise as well as future targeting modalities.

**E-CARDS**

WFP plans to pilot the electronic voucher programme by distributing a small number of e-cards to beneficiaries in multiple governorates and in King Abdullah Park in early November. Once the e-cards are distributed, the partner bank will automatically transfer JOD24 (US$33.84) per person to the household e-card for the November cycle. WFP hopes to use lessons learned from the pilot to roll out the electronic voucher modality across Jordan in December.

**VOUCHER HOTLINE**

WFP and cooperating partners recorded more than 700 calls in October on hotlines dedicated to receiving comments and answering queries regarding the WFP voucher programme. More than half of these calls were to change/update beneficiary contact information, while 17 percent of calls were regarding distribution locations and times. WFP also received 25 calls from individuals looking to update their family size and two complaints regarding partner shops. All calls are monitored and followed up by WFP staff in a timely manner. As WFP moves to transition to e-vouchers, WFP will expand the number of hotline staff to accommodate for the expected increase in calls.
On 24 October the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Government of Turkey, (AFAD), announced that the total number of Syrians registered and assisted in 21 camps in ten provinces exceeded 200,000. In October, WFP assisted over 116,000 beneficiaries in 14 camps with the joint WFP/Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) E-Food Card programme, reaching almost 60 percent of all camp-residing refugees. Currently, according to UNHCR, almost one fourth of all Syrian refugees reside in Turkey. The number of Syrian refugees in the country is expected to reach 1,500,000 in 2014, with 300,000 residing in camps and 1,200,000 seeking refuge in host communities.

In October, WFP transferred approximately US$4.6 million to the Turkish Red Crescent for upload to beneficiary cards in the month of November. Since the start of 2013, WFP has injected US$37.2 million into the local Turkish economy through its E-Food Card programme.

**MONITORING**

Overall, WFP monitoring and evaluation data collected throughout 2013 indicates that the foremost concern of beneficiaries interviewed in post-distribution monitoring was high prices in markets (49 percent of beneficiaries cited this as their primary concern). Additionally, it is worth noting that according to the government-published “Syrian Refugees in Turkey, 2013 Field Survey Results”, almost 40 percent of camp-residing Syrian refugees cited economic reasons as to why they chose to live in camps. WFP regularly discusses beneficiary concerns in conjunction with key stakeholders including: AFAD, camp management and the TRC with a view to addressing issues through adjusted programming.

WFP field monitors have observed a rise in winter-preparedness requests across all camps. In Kahramanmaraş camp, officials have distributed 3,000 heaters as well as coats, blankets and approximately 4,000 pairs of shoes.

**IRAQ**

**DOMIZ CAMP**

With over 200,000 Syrian refugees, Iraq hosts almost 10 percent of the entire Syrian refugee population in the region. Syrian families are currently accommodated in host communities as well as fifteen established and transit camps. Prior to the large influx of Syrian refugees in August and early September 2013, Domiz camp was the only refugee camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which hosts over 95 percent of all Syrian refugees in the country. In October, over 62,000 beneficiaries received vouchers in Domiz camp, providing beneficiaries with over US$1.9 million for redemption in three local shops. Since the start of 2013, WFP has injected US$14.3 million into the Iraqi market through the food voucher programme. Plans are currently underway to establish shops closer to, or within the camp in order to enhance access to food markets and to further reduce crowding.

WFP recently established a hotline for comments and queries pertaining to the food voucher programme. Beneficiaries can now call the hotline to leave comments for WFP or to ask questions about specific aspects of WFP’s operation, including queries about distributions and retailers.
All Syrian refugees residing in Al Obady camp (almost 2000 people) received individual monthly food rations in October. This included 570 students who, in addition to general food distributions, received daily snacks of fortified biscuits as part of WFP’s school feeding programme.

WFP also distributed monthly family food rations to over 26,000 Syrian refugees in the other camps within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Over 4,300 students in Kawr Gosk, Baserma, Qushtapa and Baharka camps received high-energy biscuits as part of WFP’s school feeding programme for Syrian refugee children. WFP hopes to expand the programme to schools in other camps once they are opened.

**CHALLENGES**

The establishment of 13 transit and established refugees camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has led to increased challenges for the limited number of staff and vehicles. Pending the recruitment of additional monitoring staff and the purchase of more vehicles, only a limited number of field visits and monitoring activities can currently be undertaken.
Although the number of Syrian refugees in Egypt continues to rise, there has also been a steady increase in the number of those ‘leaving’ or ‘case closures’. UNHCR reported 249 closures in July, 823 in August and 1,073 in September. Most refugees who close their cases do so in order to leave Egypt for Turkey, Lebanon or Jordan, with some returning to Syria. Reasons given for leaving Egypt include economic concerns, re-joining family members and uncertainty over the security situation in Egypt. There has also been a dramatic increase in the number of migrants departing illegally for Italy by sea with 6,233 arriving in the last three months (mostly from Egypt; this includes unaccompanied minors) compared to 350 in all of 2012.

Despite the current macro-economic challenges, Egypt’s relatively large economy with nominal GDP for the fiscal year of 2012/2013 (1.7 trillion Egyptian pounds or about US$260 billion) is unlikely to be significantly affected by the estimated 126,000 Syrian refugees who are registered with UNHCR. WFP price monitoring and anecdotal references show insignificant impact either on the availability of food or on market prices of food. However, in some areas of high Syrian refugee concentration and high unemployment rates, refugees are reportedly competing with Egyptians in the job market.

In October WFP distributions were completed in Alexandria and Damietta, reaching over 25,000 Syrian refugees or 95 per cent of the targeted beneficiaries in addition to 74 Palestinian refugees from Syria.

WFP is planning to reach 70,000 Syrian refugees and 2,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria with vouchers in November. Distributions are commencing in Alexandria and Damietta in the second week of November and beneficiaries will be able to redeem their vouchers through two supermarket partners with one branch in Damietta and five branches in Alexandria. WFP continues to work closely with UNRWA to obtain updated contact information for Palestinian refugees from Syria for their inclusion into the WFP voucher programme.

E-VOUCHERS

WFP and UNHCR are working on transitioning to the OneCard assistance platform and are currently receiving Expressions of Interest from banks, IT companies and service providers. The OneCard is an electronic voucher modality which will allow different organizations to provide assistance to the same beneficiary using one electronic card (which will function like a debit card). This system will assist in ensuring food assistance to targeted Syrians and Palestinians from Syria beneficiaries in greater Cairo, Alexandria, Damietta and possibly other Governorates. Since the start of the voucher programme in February 2013, WFP has injected nearly US$7.4 million into the local Egyptian economy through partner supermarkets.

MONITORING

WFP Egypt is currently piloting innovative electronic data collection for programme monitoring and evaluation for the first time. Field monitors have been trained in using tablets and are now training local NGO cooperating partners. The monitoring questionnaires have been created in Arabic in order to enable the participation of local NGO staff. Electronic data collection will begin in November and is expected to reduce paper usage and increase program efficiency.
SECURITY

The Government of Egypt has indicated they are not likely to extend the state of emergency past mid-November. WFP food voucher distributions are currently not being affected by the state of emergency and curfew (now reduced to 01:00 – 05:00 daily except for Fridays where it remains as 19:00-05:00) presently in place.

CHALLENGES

Distributions in greater Cairo distribution sites were incomplete in October due to issues with the partner supermarket, however measures to mitigate the constraint have since been agreed to and distributions for November will proceed. Meanwhile refugee community meetings have been held in collaboration with UNHCR to respond to concerns with the voucher delay and provide updates. Mitigation measures include extended voucher distributions and longer validity periods at the supermarket to limit crowding, additional messaging to refugees on appropriate conduct, and increased field monitor presence in the supermarkets during redemption periods.

WFP REGIONAL OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

Money injected into the local economy since the start of 2013:

- **LEBANON**: US$ 95.5 million
- **JORDAN**: US$ 75.5 million
- **TURKEY**: US$ 37.2 million
- **IRAQ**: US$ 14.3 million
- **EGYPT**: US$ 7.4 million

Total: **US$ 229.9 million**

Reconciliation of figures ongoing
WFP is grateful for the critical support provided by multilateral donors in response to the Syria crisis, as well as that of Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, the United States and private donors.